



General Certificate of Education

Leisure Studies

8641/8643/8646/8649

LS09 Working in the People Business

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - June series

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GENERAL

What was particularly good

1. Candidates showed more detailed knowledge of the subject matter than in previous series. They now need to apply that knowledge better to the specific tasks set.
2. Many candidates have evidently studied relevant leisure organisations and it is pleasing that they are writing in more detail about real jobs, teams, contracts, redundancy situations, etc.

What was not so good

1. Candidates - as often happens in all exams - did not read the wording of questions carefully enough. For example, in the question on equal opportunities they did not relate their answers solely to job applications.
2. There remains a tendency for some candidates to write as if the leisure organisation exists for the benefit of its employees. Candidates should give as much thought to how workplace practices can help the work of the organisation as to how the organisation should support its employees and treat them fairly.

Question 1

The specification is looked at from the viewpoint of the leisure organisation and this question is a case in point. Candidates were nearly all clear on the benefits of *induction*. However, some outlined how induction would make the employee more at ease without going on to say how that would help the work of the organisation. Candidates generally showed a good understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of *on the job training*. Many candidates found a suitable way of assessing ("*this would not be so convenient for the organisation because ...*") and the best answers weighed up what had been discussed in order to arrive at a conclusion based on the balance of arguments.

Question 2

Candidates are becoming more familiar with the organisational structure or 'job hierarchy' diagram and are beginning to show their understanding of lines of decision-making, communication, accountability and reporting. They are also seeing it in the horizontal as well as vertical dimension by explaining the span of control and the separation of different sections in the organisation. The marks scheme demonstrates the main benefits of such a structure.

Candidates understood the motivational benefit of forming teams ("*supporting each other*") but did not go on to show how a team can be effective by, for example, sharing different expertise, encouraging discussion about work, putting specialists into different roles, etc. There were, however, some good case studies of actual teams which were useful to illustrate how named organisations had improved productivity.

Question Task 3

This question was answered well, because candidates focused on the future benefits of the scheme in making the young person more employable.

Question 4

Candidates generally chose three appropriate items for inclusion in a typical contract. Some suggestions, like the names of the employee and organisation, were self-defeating as it was difficult to 'give reasons for their inclusion'. Some candidates gave 'circular' reasons ("*Salary is included to show how much the employee will be paid*") which did not take them any further towards explaining what a contract achieves by, for example, clarifying the obligations and entitlements of an employee, or exemplifying where the contract could prevent a problem.

Question 5

This question concerned the ways in which a panel would identify the best candidate during an interview. The answer should include not only the expertise and preparedness of the panel but also particular strategies to eliminate bias and enable the attributes of job candidates to come through. For example, a panel should ask the same questions of all job candidates using criteria relevant to the job concerned, and employ an objective scoring system.

Question 6

All candidates were able to find some shortcomings contained in the draft advertisement and most went on to say why they made it ineffective. The best answers specified how these shortcomings would cause difficulties for the leisure organisation in the recruitment process and the cost of failing to attract the best possible candidates. In any sort of question about recruitment advertising, candidates might expect to be asked for a suggestion where the advert should be placed. Answers must be much more specific than (for example) '*on the internet*' or '*at the leisure centre*', and the reasons for that place must be justified.

Question 7

This question required candidates to look at how equal opportunities legislation has helped people *applying* for jobs. Therefore the Equal Pay Act and Minimum Wage are not relevant here. The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act is not regarded in the same way as equal opportunity legislation. It enables some criminal convictions to become spent in order to help people who have been convicted to rejoin society, though there are important exceptions. Candidates should not write about the legal requirements upon employers as if a conviction were the same as disability, age, gender, sexual orientation or ethnic minority group. Indeed, more important is the legal requirement to protect vulnerable people.

Few candidates gave specific attention to evaluating *how much* support was given. For example, with job applications, no heed should be paid to race, gender, religious belief, age or marital status but disability *can* prevent a person being appointed to a job. On the other hand, definite help should be given to people with a disability, such as application forms being available in large print and people with a hearing loss being offered help to communicate during an interview.

Question 8

This was the first time a question on redundancy had been set and many candidates showed a good understanding of the main factors that might be taken into account. These would mainly include the criteria for selecting people for redundancy and the basis on which redundancy pay is made. In this question it was made clear that the gym had been closed, so it was not helpful to write about whether it should be closed or not.

Question 9

Most candidates were able to describe some negative and positive aspects of their chosen job but failed to go further and evaluate them: they tended to treat them all as being of equal weight

and significance. Better answers also referred back to the balance of positive and negative aspects to determine whether the job could be recommended to a young person. Candidates who wrote about a manager were not penalised but it was felt that they had not chosen a realistic job for a young person looking for a career in the leisure industry so much as the long-term goal, and consequently they found the question harder to answer.

Suggestions for teachers to prepare future candidates

Candidates should be trained to take time in the exam room and read questions more closely. The purpose is not only to ensure that they obey command words such as "evaluate" or "assess the extent to which", but also to include all aspects of a question which has several elements. Examples from this paper would include question 6(a) or 7 where candidates tended to answer only the more straightforward elements of the question.

Candidates often restate the question or make some very general point in the first four or five lines of an answer, which earns no credit. In a time-limited exam with a precise mark scheme, they should answer the question set more directly from the start.

Centres should prepare candidates to answer questions about two leisure jobs, and in particular the nature of the work and the qualifications, experience, skills and qualities needed to do the job. However, candidates must be adaptable. Questions are unlikely to ask them simply to recite the requirements for the chosen job but to use that information to answer a particular task.

Centres should remind candidates that the specification is looked at from the viewpoint of the leisure organisation rather than the leisure customer or person seeking a job. Thus, for example, candidates should study what a leisure organisation is looking for from an application form or in an interview.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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